



March 25, 2020

Via Email & U.S. Mail

Bruce.summers@ams.usda.gov

Mr. Bruce Summers, Administrator
Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Mail Stop 0201
Washington, DC 20250

Re. Request to Include Domestic Shrimp in TEFAP List of Commodities

Dear Mr. Summers:

The COVID-19 crisis presents another major hurdle for our American seafood workers, especially those harvesting and processing wild-caught American shrimp. The nationwide restaurant shutdown has significantly reduced seafood demand and prices since the President's COVID-19 Outbreak National Emergency Declaration on March 13, 2020.

Restaurant closures are dealing a particularly harsh blow to the US shrimp industry because 80% of shrimp consumption occurs at the restaurant level.¹ Shrimp is by far the most consumed fishery product in the country² and the American shrimp fishery needs immediate relief to survive the COVID-19 Outbreak National Emergency.

The U.S. Congress is in the final stages of delivering a significant stimulus package to assist U.S. businesses and provide relief to our workforce. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201), which was signed into law on March 18, 2020, included \$400 million for the Commodity Assistance Program to distribute emergency food assistance. Furthermore, the U.S. Senate's proposed Phase 3 legislation, more formally known as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, allocates an additional \$450 million for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) approves vendors and establishes schedules of commodities to be purchased under TEFAP. Domestic, wild-caught U.S. shrimp is currently not on the schedule of commodities. The

¹ See U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC), Certain Frozen Warmwater Shrimp from Brazil, China, India, Thailand, and Vietnam, Inv. Nos. 731-TA-1063, 1064, 1066-1068 (Second Review), Final Staff Report (Apr. 12, 2017).

² See National Oceanic Atmospheric Association (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service, *Fisheries of the United States, 2018 Report* (Feb. 11, 2020).

American Shrimp Processors Association (ASPA) respectfully requests that the AMS include wild-caught American shrimp in its list of commodities to be provided by USDA for TEFAP.

ASPA's processors have the ability to provide 20,000,000 pounds of frozen warm-water wild-caught U.S. shrimp for the soon-to-be authorized program. The inventory is held in private and public freezers throughout the Southeast and Atlantic Coasts. We look forward to receiving your favorable response so that our domestic shrimp fishery can survive this current crisis while also supplying American-made sustenance to those most in need.

Sincerely,

Dr. C. David Veal
Executive Director
American Shrimp Processors Association
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